

COUNTY FOREST COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN

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CHAPTER 700

ROADS AND ACCESS

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700 ACCESS CONTROL AND HISTORY

Resource management, protection activities, recreational uses, and other public uses on the Barron County Forest require several different types of access. Since the Forest is small and diverse with many small compartments, a nearly complete network of access routes has been developed over the years. A combination of geography, soils, vegetation, surface waters, seasons of the year, presence/absence of roads or trails, ownership of adjoining lands, and public regulations interact to control access to any part of the Forest. The Forest has a long history of having gated accesses, dating from the late 1960s. This control of access to the forest has been strongly supported by the public in the development of the past two plans and again had overwhelming support in 2005 public meetings. Currently two roads (the road to Kelly Lake and the Goose Lake Access road) are open to public vehicle access

All of the existing roads and trails were originally developed as logging roads, or trails used to reach popular hunting and fishing areas. The locations and standards for these earlier roads were not routinely established by county personnel nor were they all correctly placed or constructed.

Over the years, frequency of vehicle use on the Forest has increased in response to an expanding number of motorized recreational vehicles and to provide access for our harvest program. Often times, different uses have occurred on the same trails with minimal conflicts. But the diverse demands for, and uses of, the County Forest have reached the point where integrated access management planning is needed. Some of the issues involve;

- User conflict between groups: e.g., snowmobiling versus cross-country skiing; hunting on foot versus use of vehicles for access to game populations.
- Safety: e.g., pleasure riding of horses on the same trail with ATV vehicle traffic, or hiking.
- Erosion: soils eroding due to use, or over-use by vehicles without routine maintenance.
- Damage to access: rutted or impassable roads requiring costly repair by the

county or other specific user groups (e.g., snowmobile/atv club).

- Litter: depositing garbage and waste on the Forest.
- Over-utilization of a resource; e.g. reduced availability of trophy-sized deer, excessive harvest of ruffed grouse along trails, overharvest of bobcat.
- Crowding: e.g. complaints from hunters about intensified competition for traditional hunting areas as a result of better access.
- Fires: e.g. increased exposure of the resource to forest fire occurrence.
- Endangered species management: e.g. high road densities conflict with timber wolf recovery, eagle and osprey nest disturbance.
- Invasive species: e.g. introduction of invasive exotic species along travel routes.
- Developmental trends: e.g. preservation of the County Forest solitude by limiting access versus development of high intensity use by additional roads and unlimited access.
- Road placement: e.g. some roads should be closed for improper location and evaluated for replacement.

705 CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

1. Provide direction to the committee and resource managers in order to maintain a network of roads and trails on the County Forest. This will meet the needs for resource management and protection activities, as well as provide public access for recreation opportunities.
2. Identify the distribution, density, and types of roads and uses of roads and trails needed to establish a safe and efficient transportation and recreation system that complements the economic, environmental, and social interest in the County Forest.
3. Identify the existing and future County Forest roads eligible for transportation aids under s.86.315(1), Wis. Stats.
4. Identify areas on the County Forest where the access is limited or restricted.
5. Identify the provisions and criteria that will be policy when addressing management

issues on the County Forest.

710 ROADS

The Barron County Forest staff will oversee the construction and maintenance of all roads within the County Forest. These roads may be constructed and maintained by the County, private contractors working under contract and/or the direction of the county, other public resource agencies and/or by cooperative agreements with non-profit organizations. The specifications for road construction and maintenance will vary with the frequency, duration, and planned use of each road. Three major types of roads occur on the Forest: permanent primary roads; permanent secondary roads, and limited use roads and trails.

It is anticipated that there is little or no need for further road construction on the forest, but if resource needs require further development we will consider new construction.

New road establishment should consider information identifying areas with sensitive soils or severe slopes that have the potential for adverse water quality impacts from land management practices. County staff can work with local DNR water resources staff to develop site-specific measures where appropriate and request necessary water regulation permits where required.

710.1 PERMANENT PRIMARY FOREST ROADS

These roads are the primary public roads traveling through the County Forest. They are designed, constructed, and maintained for year-round use. Primary roads are maintained by their respective townships. These roads serve as essential access corridors for the county's multiple use management goals. Some of these roads are graveled. Vehicle use may be restricted at various times of the year to minimize physical damage to the road. These are not gas tax roads.

710.2 PERMANENT SECONDARY ROADS

These roads often serve a variety of uses including forest management, fire protection, and recreation. These roads are maintained as part of a permanent road system but are often narrower than permanent primary roads and are built and maintained to lower standards. Some of these roads are designed for use only when the ground is frozen or firm.

Some roads in this category are located in areas on the Forest where motor vehicle use is

limited or restricted. In these instances, the roads will be blocked and/or signed as restricted

In instances where motorized traffic is restricted, vehicle access will only be authorized for planned management activities, fire protection, and in cases where motorized handicapped access has been approved. Foot traffic is allowed on all roads.

710.4 STATE, COUNTY, TOWN DRIVEWAY PERMITS

710.4.1 State Highways

Wisconsin DOT generally requires permits for permanent and temporary driveways on State highways. The County will track and retain permit records and work with local DOT officials for access.

710.4.2 County Highways

Installation of driveways onto County Highways will adhere to the county driveway policy.

710.4.3 Town Roads

Installation of driveways onto Town roads will adhere to the respective township driveway policy.

710.5 UTILITIES

Overhead and underground utilities are maintained by their respective agencies.

710.6 CULVERTS

In many cases culverts are needed on roads that are on the County Forest when dealing with drainages, wetlands and stream crossings. Some of these are temporarily placed culverts that are used during a specific project then removed, while others are permanent structures.

In all instances, culverts will be placed according to required DNR permitting procedures and will follow BMP's for culverts that can be found in chapters 4 and 5 of the WI BMP's for

Water Quality PUB FR-093 2010.

Routine maintenance of these structures is conducted to make sure structures are adequately working.

715 RESTRICTED ACCESS AREAS

In addition to providing trails for motorized vehicle use, the Forest may also provide designate areas where motorized vehicles are not permitted unless authorized by the Committee. The principal intent of these areas is to prevent environmental damage to sensitive areas, protect historical or archeological sites, protect endangered and threatened species, provide for human safety and provide areas for quiet, secluded recreation. Motorized access is prohibited except on designated ATV and snowmobile trails.

720 WILD LAKES

The surface waters encompassed under the wild lakes designation include those restricted use areas that are not open to any gasoline-powered vehicles, water craft, or snowmobiles. In general, all or most of the shorelines of these lakes and streams are owned by Barron County. Counties may request that townships, under authority of s. 30.77 (3) Wis. Stats., establish regulations restricting motorized use on these surface waters. Canoes, kayaks, and boats propelled by wind, oars, or electric motors are permitted. Gasoline or diesel powered equipment is not permitted except for Goose Lk and Kelly Lake. The intent of these restrictions is to protect the aquatic resources of these lakes but still allow human access.

725 ROAD CONSTRUCTION BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR WATER QUALITY

The layout and construction of any new road or trail situated on the County Forest shall adhere to *Wisconsin's Best Management Practices for Water Quality* (PUB-FR-093-95). This access management plan addresses the need and diversity level of forest roads and trails within the County Forest. The BMP Manual provides guidelines for road construction. Soil disturbance activities in highly erodible soil areas may require mitigating measures in excess of those

currently listed in the Best Management Practices manual PUB-FR-093-2010. Wider buffers, sediment control structures and water diversion techniques will be used as appropriate in these sensitive areas.

730 SIGNS

Signs on the County Forest will be used discreetly to perform and function with minimal disruption to the multiple uses of the Forest. Private signs promoting personal, commercial or political objectives will not be permitted. Signs erected by the county for management purposes or by non-profit recreational trail groups will be as follows:

1. Informational Type Signs
 - A. Interpretive Signs - to educate the general public about forest management practices.
 - B. Public Land Signs - to identify the land as Barron County Forest property.
 - C. Trail Markers - to provide direction and safety to trail users.
 - D. Scientific, Historical or Geological Markers - to identify points of interest.
 - E. Recreational Facility Markers - to identify park entrances, etc.
 - F. Directional Markers.
2. Regulatory Type Signs - to regulate the use of the Forest in specific areas.

730.1 SIGNING STANDARDS

To assure that signs will serve a purpose without damaging aesthetics, the following standards will be maintained:

1. All signs will be mounted on treated wood posts or steel backed wooden posts.
2. Routed wood signs will be used wherever practical. Fiberboard or painted metal signs, when used, will be of neat appearance.
3. Signs placed on snowmobile and ATV trails must conform to state standards.
4. All authorized signs shall be protected by ordinance from being damaged, defaced, obstructed, removed, or possessed by unauthorized persons.
5. All unauthorized signs will be removed by the Forestry staff. No compensation will be afforded for loss or damage to signs during such removal. Individuals erecting unauthorized signs may be prosecuted under s. 43.13(3), Wis. Stats.